

master must prove a contract (by the person he claims) to perform labor, or he has no claim upon him at all.

This is a view I do not recollect to have seen stated. Certain it is that it is lost sight of by nearly all, or quite all, our great men.

A conviction of the truth of this position must be my apology for offering my opinions on the subject.

Respectfully thy friend,

ARTHUR SHARP.

Near Fishers, Ohio.

## THE NATIONAL ERA.

WASHINGTON, SEPTEMBER 12, 1850.

### THE POSITION OF THE NATIONAL ERA.

On the eve of our departure from Washington, we stated, in an editorial article, our views respecting the policy of abducting slaves—views held by us from the time we became an advocate of the Anti-Slavery Cause. That article was intended as a complete definition of our position, and a final disposition, so far as we were concerned, of the subject of which it treated. Our opinions, we knew, differed from those entertained by some Anti-Slavery men, but as our object was simply to present a clear statement of the rule of our own conscience, and to leave the rest to be solved, with feeling of dispassionate towards any other.

It was, therefore, with profound regret that we observed in the *Era* of the 29th ult., an article in reply to certain animadversions of the *Free Press*, especially as it was calculated, though not designed, to place the *Era* in a false position. Courtesy to the friends who furnish editorial matter during my absence forbids all captious objections, but a regard for Truth constrains me to say that, with my whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, I repudiate the principle embodied in the following sentences of the article referred to:

"He (the citizen) is therefore morally, socially, and politically bound to obey the laws of the land, whether he believes them to be just or not. He is further bound to obey what he believes to be unjust laws, because he is privileged to remonstrate, petition, and vote against their continuance."

The proposition, stripped of extraneous matter, and in its plainest form, is this: If the law of the State in which I live, requires me to do an unjust act, I am morally bound to do it; a proposition which I could not assent to without denying the existence of a *Dei* or the sovereignty of his authority.

To me Human Law has no sanctity, no authority, any further than it is a transcript of, or in harmony with, "the Higher Law," the Divine Law, the Law of Nature, the Law of Him who has created all things, and has paramount authority over all things. If it receive my reverence and obedience, it is because it is just and true, and has therefore the sanction of Him to whom alone I acknowledge absolute allegiance, and not because of the existence of Human Penalties or rewards. I recognize no sanctity, no authority in any Human Law which is in conflict with the Divine Law. If it requires me to do a moral wrong, it requires what the Universe has no right to require—to commit an act of rebellion against the Supreme Lawgiver. I will not do that wrong, but will disobey the Law and submit to the penalty. Disobedience is demanded by my allegiance to Justice and Truth; submission, by my respect for Peace and Order.

I shall not now argue those positions: it is sufficient for me to state them concisely and plainly, so that there may be no misapprehension of the ethical principles that control the columns of the *National Era*.

My views of the policy of abducting slaves were fully presented in the *Era* of the 15th ult. I wish to add nothing to them, subtract nothing from them, qualify them in no respect.

G. BAILEY.

Lyons, Mass., Sept. 1, 1850.

\* Remarks by the Editor pro tempore.

A moment's consideration will show that Dr. Bailey has totally misconstrued the paragraph quoted, and it is due to me that I should have the privilege of saying so through the columns of the *Era*. He has confounded two things essentially different, viz: doing and suffering. The proposition to which he objects is, that men are bound to obey unjust laws—submit would have been a more appropriate word, and would have conveyed my meaning more definitely. But submission is obedience, and, therefore, the word is not out of place.

Laws rarely command the citizen to do a particular thing—they are almost invariably prohibitory, so far as they affect the mass of the citizens, not commendatory. The command is directed to the officers of the Law. Men are not commanded to hold Africans in slavery—they are only prohibited from assisting in slavery—they are prohibited from assisting in the slave in occupying from his owner. Dr. Bailey submits to the prohibition, although he holds it to be unjust. He does so in the conviction that submission to the injustice is a less evil than would result from the infraction of the law—in other words, he feels bound, as a good citizen, to obey the injunction of the law. Of the obligation of laws commanding unjust actions, I entertain the same opinion with Dr. Bailey. I hold that no human authority has a right to command me to do that which my conscience condemns as wrong; and I should feel a perfect right to disobey such a regulation. But, in point of fact, I never have been called upon to perform such an action. I have lived all my life in the atmosphere of slavery, and yet the law has never required me to do anything inconsistent with my sense of right—perhaps with a single exception. I allude to the police regulations of the slave States, which require all persons to serve on the patrol, and to punish slaves for conduct which I hold to be innocent. But even in this case no one is actually compelled to serve. He has the option of serving or paying a trifling fine, and such is the case in all similar instances.

I might fortify my position by the authority of the New Testament, the recognized standard of morality throughout Christendom. We are commanded to "resist not evil," and to "submit ourselves to the higher powers," and in obedience to these injunctions the early Christians submitted to a thousand unjust laws, while they freely suffered martyrdom rather than *commit* them—in a word, they felt bound to give citizens to slavery, but never to fulfill it in the name of law.

### CANDIDATES FOR CONGRESS.

Many of the members of the present Congress are candidates for reelection. We hope that our readers among their constituents have kept watchful eyes upon their action during the session now drawing to a close.

Those who have proved untrue to Freedom during the recent struggle should be defeated at all hazards. Better send new men, even if no better than their predecessors, than return those who have once proved unfaithful. Let them be punished, wherever they succeed. The example and warning will do good.

In no case should any anti-slavery man vote for any candidate for Congress who will not distinctly state in writing—

1. That he will vote for and cordially support a bill to prohibit slavery in the Territories.

2. That he will vote for and cordially support a bill for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia.

3. That he will steadily and inflexibly oppose and vote against the admission of any more slave States, whether created out of Texas or the Territories.

4. That he will neither support nor vote for any person as Speaker of the House of Representatives who is not known to be ready and willing to organize the Committees of the House to give the freedom of the free States their just influence in the business of legislation.

These are now the vital points of controversy between the allied forces of Hunkerism and the Slave Power against the Jeffersonian Democracy. Every energy of Freemen should be brought to bear upon them. Hunkerism and the Slave Power regard the question of prohibiting slavery in

the Territories as settled. Let them learn their mistake at the ballot-boxes. A seat of Government uncontaminated with slavery is essential to freedom of legislation. No one can estimate the social influences of a slaveholding city against Freedom. The struggle for more slave States is to be renewed at once. The people of the free States should at once prepare to meet it. Webster and others have endeavored to deliver them bound into the hands of their adversaries on this question. Let the bands be burst as by Samson. But, above all, let freemen look to the organization of the House and the Senate. With the committees of the two Houses against them, next to nothing can be done. The election of a slaveholding Speaker determined at this session the organization of committees so as to insure the repeal of laws which have been actually witnessed. The combination of the caucuses of the old parties in the Senate so organized the committees of that body that no measure favorable to Liberty could receive the sanction of any one of them. The people must look to these things. If they would have this course of action reformed, they must see to their own elections of Representatives, and to the choice of Senators by their State Legislatures.

For the National Era.

### LOVEST THOU ME?

BY MARY LEVING.

"Lovest thou Me more than I do?"

Mother! leading off the oracle

Of thy earliest born,

Watching him the blue eyes open

To the busy dawn,

Pointing from his purest fountain

Karl's idolatry;

Listen to the voice that murmured

"Lovest thou Me?"

Sister! by the "midnight taper"

Counting labor life;

For thy childhood's best beloved,

In his manhood's night;

Still for him thine eye to Heaven

Lifting tenderly;

Back to thee that whisper stealthily

"Lovest thou Me?"

Maiden! with a deeper trusting

Than a sister's own;

With the silent stars to watch thee,

Dreaming—alone;

Breathing of the star that lighteth

Earth and Heaven to thee;

Start not when another asketh

"Lovest thou Me?"

Watch! by the fainting night lamp,

O'er a father's gleam,

Flickering on the tips that loveliest

Love's last early beam;

With that last convulsive quivering

To thine agony,

Comes the Comforter's still whisper

"Lovest thou Me?"

Oh! thy heart's by earthly loving

Learn the love of Heaven;

Not to wait from the Creator

Was his creature given;

He who tunes our spirit's harp-strings

To such harmony,

Will surely tune them sweetly

"Lovest thou Me?"

THE DUTY OF THE FREE DEMOCRAT.

The California Admission Bill, the Utah Territorial Bill, and the Texas Boundary and New Mexico Territorial Bill, have received the approval of President Fillmore, and have become laws of the land.

What has been gained and what lost to Freedom by these acts?

1. The entire Pacific coast is covered by a prohibition against slavery—in Oregon by act of Congress; in California by the Constitution of the State. Both these splendid acquisitions to the free soil of the Union are due, mainly, to the action of the Jeffersonian Democracy at Buffalo, and subsequently.

2. On the other hand, the Texas Boundary Bill surrenders at least ninety thousand square miles of free soil to slavery, and creates a national debt of ten millions of dollars to buy off Texas from a threatened attack upon the United States. This act will stand among the legislative phenomena of our day and nation conspicuous in the darkness of its disgrace. The terms which it proposes of course be eagerly accepted by Texas, and there is no remedy. The territory is gone, and the debt is fixed.

3. New Mexico and Utah remain. The former of these Territories contains, at a rough estimate, two hundred thousand square miles of land; the latter, one hundred and fifty thousand.

The acts providing Governments for these Territories contain no provision directly establishing or prohibiting slavery. The only clauses which have any bearing upon the subject, in any way, are three: 1. That which provides that the States to be carved out of them shall be admitted with or without slavery, as the Constitution of the new States may decide. 2. That which provides that no citizen shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, except by the judgment of his peers, or the law of the land. 3. That which provides for appeals to the Supreme Court of the United States in cases where personal liberty or title to slaves may be in question.

It will be observed that the first of these clauses admits a construction which will allow the introduction of slaves into the Territories; for, by introduction of slaves into the Territories, for any contingency, out of a Territory where there can be no slaves?

The second of these clauses was intended, doubtless, to countenance the Southern claim to hold slaves in the Territories. But it will hardly avail, inasmuch as the Constitution is above the law, and provides that no person shall be deprived of liberty without due process of law.

The third clause has been thought to admit a similar construction, but it is obvious that questions of title to slaves may arise where the law allows no slavery. The case of *Somerset* is an instance. Every case of claim to an alleged fugitive slave in a free State is an instance. The clause was inserted on a motion of Mr. Hale, with no intention to admit the existence of slavery in the Territories; but especially to allow a full contest of the claim to hold slaves, whenever made.

But the fact that clauses like the first and second of these have been permitted to find place in these bills, will, in all language affecting any legislation, however slight, against slavery, has been carefully excluded, is sufficient to arouse the jealous attention of every friend of freedom. The tameness with which Northern men consented to these clauses showed how little most of them understood or care to understand the subtleties of the Slave Power, and how cold are their hearts towards liberty!

Let judges, of Southern views, be appointed, and they will find in these clauses implications in favor of slavery sufficient to establish it, even if they should not be quite ready to adjudicate the favorite doctrine of the slaveholders, that slavery exists in the Territories by force of the Constitution itself. Congress has provided no guard against Territorial slavery. They have rather intimated a consent to its introduction. But the whole real responsibility is now cast upon Mr. Fillmore's Administration. The Executive can introduce or exclude slavery at pleasure. What its action will be, remains to be seen.

Meanwhile these facts indicate clearly the duty of the Free Democracy. The great question of Freedom or Slavery for the Territories, yet remains entirely open and unsettled. It must not be left to the doubtful action of any Administration. The Jeffersonian Democrats in Congress should at once introduce bills for the prohibition of slavery in the United States, and thus appeal to the people. The Free Democracy, everywhere throughout the country, should recognize itself. It has just fought one noble battle in Vermont, and another in Maine. Whigism has indeed triumphed in the former State; but it was obliged to select its candidate for Governor from the ranks of the old Liberty men.

But the Hunkerism of Democracy was reduced to a corporal guard. The result in Maine is not yet ascertained; but the best hopes are cherished. In Wisconsin, also, and in Ohio, the signs are cheering. In New York, the Democratic Convention at Syracuse will, it is hoped, take ground on which Jeffersonian Democrats can consistently stand. If not, the Free Democracy, whether few or many, should rally under its own separate banner. No alliances should be made or maintained at the expense of principles. And why cannot all anti-slavery men who vote at all, unite with the Free Democracy? Their platform is broad enough for all, and their progressive principle admits of continual enlargement. Would that all anti-slavery men could remember that in Union there is strength—in Division, weakness.

For the National Era.

### SHORT NOTES ON FRENCH MANNERS.

No. 1.

HOW PEOPLE GET MARRIED IN FRANCE.

Where novels finish, I begin—for marriage, if the end of young ladies, is the beginning of society. In France, it is the peculiar institution, the jutting point which first catches the eye of a foreigner. If there be not some such salient angle, I should be embarrassed to know how to begin.

For the National Era.

Englishman calls his lively neighbor, others see inequalities in his polished surface. With Johnny Bull, the reverse is true: one may always take him by the horns, or by any other part of his rugged coat.

French women are seen everywhere: they meet you at the custom-house when you land, receive you at the hotels, sell you to the stores, and charm you always. Your first walk on arriving at Paris is to the famous promenade of the Boulevard, and thence to the Champs Elysees. What soft cohorts of sparkling-eyed beauties meet the gaze! what a gentle rustling there is of silks and muslins! The air, too, is exhilarating and redolent with the most delicate perfumes. Little feet twinkle from under the cloudy folds of poplins and watered silks. Beauties with complexions of every tint, from the rose-leaf hue of the Norman lady to the rich brown of the daughters of the Pyrenees, recline in graceful languor on the velvet cushions of the calashes and phaetons that roll so noiselessly along.

Do not fall into the error of supposing that any of these ladies are in the market. If they are, be sure they are not exposed as merchandise, but are only on the lookout for men who are so. It is a gross slander on French women to say that men buy and sell them. The truth is just the reverse: they buy the men—or their parents do it for them. A man with four daughters has just that number of husbands to purchase for them. I know a well-fitted, amiable, rose-faced specimen of the better class of the bourgeoisie, who has four girls to marry. "Mon Dieu," says he, clasping his hands, "shall I ever be rich enough to get husbands for them all?" He has been hard at work for many years accumulating money to give each of them a suitable dowry. For, in France, no dowry, no husband, is a proverb of a most practical character. Jennie, the servant girl, is laying aside a part of her wages to form a little dowry to be presented to her husband on the day of her marriage.

As the parents look to marriage as the means of securing their daughters from poverty, the girls are not permitted to mingle in society, where an access of light might spoil all prudential plans. A broad gulf lies between them and the world, and only to be passed on the bridge of matrimony. For the French girl, there are, alas! no evening parties of young people, no sleighing frolics, no house to walk to church or to singing-school. To her, coquetting or flirting are names for unknown things. If she goes to a ball, it is under the watchful eye of her mother, or of some friend who keeps a sharp duenna look to the applications made to dance with her; but balls are to her as angelic visits. She has no young acquaintances of the other sex. The probability is, that since she reached her teens, she has never spoken to a young man, with the exception of her brothers and cousins.

Her heart is uneasy with rich affections, of which she can herself make no investment; her friends charge themselves to invest safely for her. Some bright day, it may prove a dark one for her, an uncle or friend of the family comes to dinner, bringing with him a companion. The latter takes the seat next her at table, whispers flatteries in her ear, and strives to make himself vastly agreeable. The guests go, and you may imagine the father drawing his daughter tenderly to him, and asking her what she thinks of her new acquaintance; he is of a respectable family, is moral, and is willing with the amount of her dowry, and is willing to take her as his wife. Her acceptance will secure her a suitable establishment, and make happy the declining years of her parents. If the pretender is not frightful, the girl nearly always consents, without any misgivings of the future—for the faith inherent in woman's nature refuses to believe that her husband can despise the rich treasure of affection she is prepared to bring him. She has no other love to suppress, and her only desire is to love him. The short time before her marriage is filled with the dream of a brilliant future, a period of agitation, hope, and maidenly fears. She sees her betrothed two or three times in the presence of her parents, who perhaps retire a few minutes far enough off to permit the young couple to exchange a few words unheard. But it often happens that she never sees him at all before the wedding-day. In this connection, a conversation I had last year in one of the boxes of a provincial theatre, in the interval between a comedy and a tragedy, recurs to me. Chance had placed me next a casual acquaintance, the charming wife of a learned professor.

"And so you like Paris very much?"

"A preference I share no doubt with yourself, Madame, since you resided there a year or two, and were married there."

"Very true; but I know nothing of the place—for I was there in a convent school, was married on the day I left it, and came immediately to this city."

"But your husband! you did not get acquainted with him in the convent, certainly."

"Oh! no; I never saw him before the morning of our marriage, and heard of him for the first time only the day before."

Some of my readers may be scandalized at this summary way of disposing of a young lady's heart and heart, and may be ready to predict all sorts of domestic discords as the inevitable consequences. Not so fast, zealous advocates of the court of American Cupid; you exaggerate greatly the evils of the French practice. The parties in the marriage just spoken of are only one of many couples whom I have known to be most happy in their domestic relations. I am far from thinking the mode of bargain and sale of husbands the best out, but the purity and calm of woman's nature redeem many of its faults. A varied observation of several years has convinced me that the prevailing impression in America, of the want of conjugal fidelity in France, is entirely false, as regards the higher and middle classes of the bourgeoisie, and ought to be greatly modified as it regards the ancient nobility. Some of the happiest families I have visited have been dedicated to the household gods of families which date from the Crusades. The licentiousness of the aristocracy and royalist France of the last century—of those days when the royal palace was the vilest sink in France, and the King's mistress yielded precedence to his mistresses—has passed away. Conjugal infidelity is now chiefly confined to the rich of large cities, corrupted by opportunity and idleness, and the poor, corrupted by poverty.

But the French system of match-making has its inconveniences. Sometimes the gentleman proposed to declines accepting, which we can imagine must be sometimes particularly disagreeable. C—, a bustling little civil functionary in a small way, and entitled to my acquaintance by being on the hotel stairs some three times a day,

came tripping into my room one morning, rubbing his hands, and giving other signs of a departure from his usual quiet mood of mind. "Come," said he, "I want you to go with me to the church St. Sulpice. I have just received a proposition, doing 25,000 francs; but I wouldn't accept before seeing the lady, and it is all arranged that I am to meet her as she goes to mass with her mother."

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One of my American friends, a man of striking intellectual appearance, was waiting on a long since by a professional match-maker, with a proposition of marriage from a lady whom he had met once at an evening party, and conversed with for a few minutes. Nothing was waiting to make for the first good one: the attractions were a dowry in hand of 100,000 francs, expectations from a rich aunt, rich apartment in her own house, and the aid of an uncle, whose influence in the political world was very considerable. I do not know how my countryman contrived to withstand this battery brought to bear on him, but he did so, and has been waiting on the match-maker in a manner unknown to the customs of his native land. Depend on it, I have scolded him roundly for his want of gallantry in giving a lady the mitten. But a gentleman is not to be trifled with.

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